



International effort to reverse Asean obesity and diabetes spiral

International and regional experts will gather next weekend in KL to discuss latest breakthroughs in nutrition and lifestyle medicine that target metabolic diseases

Last year, the Economist Intelligence Unit's "*Tackling Obesity in Asean*" report confirmed that Malaysia has the highest rates of obesity and overweight among the Asean countries. Next week a crack team of international and local experts will come together in Kuala Lumpur to work with some of the region's top doctors and health professionals in an effort to turn the tide on this insidious yet preventable health crisis.

The International Annual Nutrition and Lifestyle Symposium, entitled '*New Frontiers in Healthcare - from disease treatment and prevention to health creation*', organised jointly by the Association of Integrated Medicine Malaysia (AIMM) [Persatuan Perubatan Integrative Malaysia] and the UK-based Alliance for Natural Health International (ANH-Intl), will take place between the 23rd and 25th of November at the Boulevard Hotel in Mid Valley, Kuala Lumpur. YBhg Datuk Dr. Hj Rohaizat bin Hj Yon, Director of the Planning Division at the Malaysian Ministry of Health, will deliver the keynote address on 'Digital healthcare in nutritional and lifestyle medicine.'

The central theme of the symposium is metabolic flexibility. There is increasing evidence that the rapid transition in both the diet and the lifestyle of people in the region, linked to a loss of metabolic flexibility, is the root cause of spiraling rates of metabolic disease in the region, including obesity, type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease and many forms of cancer.

Internationally-acclaimed health and sustainability scientist, Robert Verkerk PhD and executive director of ANH-Intl, co-facilitator and speaker at the symposium, says, "*We've seen a consistent failure of public health messaging in influencing health outcomes. Simply telling people to eat less and move more just doesn't work. That's in part because, as metabolic disease develops, the hormonal system in the body gets pushed so far out of balance that the mechanisms that normally regulate appetite and energy expenditure don't function in the way nature intended.*"

Dr Verkerk continued, "*No two people respond in the same way, so it's important to understand the nature of imbalances, so that individual protocols can be developed. Just like with other aspects of life, you have to work out exactly what's broken before you can fix it.*"

Scientific evidence now confirms that nutritional and lifestyle modifications, if delivered properly, provide a more powerful solution for metabolic diseases than drug-based methods. Dr Janethy Balakrishnan, AIMM President, with 30 years of clinical experience and as an internationally-recognised pioneer of drug-free approaches that correct metabolic imbalances, will explain how de-prescription protocols, allied with non-pharmaceutical interventions, can transform outcomes for patients.

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

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“We need to move beyond a pill-for-an-ill mentality in doctors and the public alike”, Dr Balakrishnan explained. She added: “We also need to transform the way in which we as doctors work with our patients. We shouldn’t dictate. We need to nurture, support and empower our patients, informed by the individual’s specific circumstances.”

The symposium, open to all, including health professionals, health and lifestyle coaches, companies in the health and fitness sectors as well as interested members of the public, will introduce delegates to the latest scientific and lifestyle research and clinical evidence proven to deliver results. With three decades of experience behind her, psychoneuroimmunologist Meleni Aldridge will explain the need to thoroughly understand the emotional and psycho-social drivers of an individual’s behaviour before any kind of prescription, be it nutritional, physical activity, mindfulness or medicinal, is offered.

She said, “Many of our unhealthy behaviours are in some way protective and linked to our survival instinct. They may be linked to early-life trauma or some unmet need. If you don’t deal with these issues up-front, it’s very difficult to get someone to change how they behave so they can regenerate or optimise their health.”

Resolving the metabolic disease crisis requires a sea change in how a population, along with the supporting health professions, approach the management of health. It involves a shift from a disease-centric approach, to one that focuses on health creation and optimisation. As will be revealed by various speakers at the symposium, it is only in the last two or three years that sufficient biomedical and related tests have become available that enable the proper assessment of the multiple, interconnected sub-domains of human health.

The symposium will also introduce delegates to a health coaching course that leads to a qualification through an internationally accredited, state-of-the-art, online training course delivered by the Ireland-based International Institute for Nutrition and Health. Its founder, Richard Burton, speaking to delegates on Saturday and Sunday, will explain the important role of health and nutrition coaches as an intermediary between the public and medical doctors.

Limited spaces at the symposium are still available, and bookings can be made online.

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EDITOR'S NOTES

Symposium details

Theme: New Frontiers in Healthcare - From disease treatment and prevention to health creation

Website: www.intlmedsymposium.org

Booking portal: <https://frontiers18.eventzilla.net/web/event?eventid=2138716454>



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About the Association of Integrative Medicine Malaysia

www.integrativemedicinemalaysia.org

It is AIMM's aim to track sickness to its root causes and provide concrete and achievable strategies to manage patients and transform them from sickness to health. The following Objectives are guidelines towards that endeavour:

1. To promote and enhance among practitioners of integrative medicine the practice of medicine that reaffirms the importance of the relationship between practitioner and patient, focuses on the whole person, is informed by evidence, and makes use of all appropriate therapeutic approaches, healthcare professionals and disciplines to achieve optimal health and healing.
2. To promote education and research on integrative medicine which is a new term that emphasizes the combination of both conventional and alternative approaches to address the biological, psychological, social and spiritual aspects of health and illness, which emphasizes respect for the human capacity for healing, the importance of the relationship between the practitioner and the patient, a collaborative approach to patient care among practitioners, and the practice of conventional, complementary and alternative healthcare that is evidence-based.

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3. To promote integrative medicine's primary goal of providing patients with team based health services that combine Western (Allopathic) medicine with complementary treatments in modern evolving settings, emphasizing integrated treatment modalities.

About the Alliance for Natural Health International

www.anhinternational.org

The Alliance for Natural Health International is an internationally active non-governmental organisation promoting natural and sustainable approaches to healthcare worldwide. The four primary areas of activity are campaigns, activism, research and education.

ANH-Intl's work spans multiple, trans-disciplinary fields, ranging from healthy eating and lifestyles, to the underlying science and clinical practice of health and resilience, as well as the evaluation of agricultural and food processing methods that conserve nutritional status while also being environmentally sustainable.

The organisation was founded in 2002 by Dr Robert Verkerk, an internationally acclaimed expert in agricultural and health sustainability. ANH-Intl's office is based in Dorking, UK, while its US based operates out of Atlanta, Georgia.